



NH's State Committee on Aging

February 1, 2016 Meeting Minutes

Attendees: Norma Brettell, Candace Cole-McCrea, Richard Crocker, Mark Frank, Sherri Harden, Herb Johnson, Joan Schulze,

Excused: Russ Armstrong Rep. Susan Emerson, Larry Flint, Mark Frank, Bob Ritchie, Jim Thompson

Guests: Rachel Eichenbaum Health Care for New England, Joan Marcoux DHHS, Sandra Meteivier NH Health Families, Tracey Tarr DHHS, Roger Vachon Engaging NH

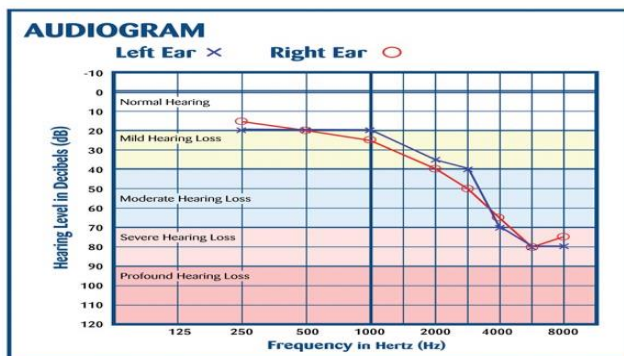
Meeting called to order at 10:00 am by Mark Frank. Attendees introduced themselves.

Motion to approve the February 1, 2016 meeting minutes, motion was approved.

Guest Speaker: Joan Marcoux, Communications Specialist DHHS – Hearing Loss and Hearing Assistive Technology.

In the US there are about 50 million people with hearing loss, the incident rate is 1 in 9 in the general population, 1 in 3 are 65 or older, 1 in 2 that are 85 and older. Studies have shown that if you take care of your hearing you will have a better quality of life.

Many people who work around machinery may experience a neurosensory hearing loss.



* An example presbycusis (sloping high-frequency hearing loss) synonymous with the ageing process.

When you look at the noisiest professions, 44% of carpenters, 28% of plumbers, 49% of mental workers, and 60% military service members experience hearing loss.

Hearing Aids: Hearing aids are costly and can range from \$1000 to \$3500 per hearing aid. Batteries last about seven days.

A **cochlear implant (CI)** is a surgically implanted electronic device that provides a sense of sound to a person who is profoundly deaf or severely hard of hearing. Cochlear implants may help provide hearing in patients who are deaf because of damage to sensory hair cells in their cochleas. Cochlear implants replace the input of those lost or damaged hair cells to replicate the different frequencies and amplitudes of sound. Some CI devices use three batteries and that may only last for three days. Medicare does cover CIs.

Private insurances companies in NH are required by law (HB561- 2010) to pay fifteen hundred dollars per hearing aid every five years. Medicare does not cover hearing aids. Medicaid does cover the cost one hearing aid.

Alternatives to hearing aids are apps for your iPhone, iTouch, or iPad:

A simple free app for one's iPhone, iPod, or touch is the EarMachine, which works like an assistive listening device. Allowing one to adjust the volume and the tone. Sounds can be picked up by the microphone in the device. EarMachine is helpful in situations ranging from noisy restaurants to watching television at home.

Verbally, is a comprehensive assisted speech solution for the iPad. Verbally, is an alternative communication (AAC) iPad app and it's totally free. One type out what one would like to say and it do text to speech. Claro Pro Com is another text to speech app.

The Flip Writer app, enables one to type a message which is displayed on two displays, one facing you and the second one is an outfacing display for your client. The built-in speech recognition feature (only can be used when Wi-Fi is available) allows one to speak and have their speech captioned into large and legible text that can be easily read by your client.

Assistive Listening Devices: The Pocketalker amplifies sounds closest to the listener while reducing background noise. Ideal for one-on-one conversation, small group discussions, TV listening, or conversing in the car. There is a Pocketalker in all of the DHHS district offices.

The Comfort Duett is an easy-to-use hearing amplifier that can be used with headphones or earphones ~~.or a hearing aid.~~ It has a recharging station for recharging the batteries when not in use.

TV Listening: TV Ears consists of a transmitter that connects to the TV and a headset receiver that amplifies human speech frequencies above the background noise.

Doorbell Signaler includes a receiver that plugs into any AC outlet, while the pushbutton transmitter is mounted next to or near the door. When the doorbell is pushed a strobe light is emitted to signal that someone is at your door.

Alarm clock: The Sonic Shaker travel alarm clock comes complete with batteries, pillow strap with clasp and a protective travel case. One can be awakened by the powerful bed shaker and/or extra loud pulsating alarm so one won't sleep through appointments, work or school.

Smoke Alarms: There are many different types and models. Some require a smoke detector that emits a T3 signal that is picked up by a receiver that can tactually or visually alert one to the smoke detector going off.

Phones: A phone distribution program in NH, TEAP, is operated by Northeast Hard of Hearing. They provide specialty phones to NH residents who are deaf, hard of hearing, speech impaired or have mobility issues. Northeast Hard of Hearing also runs a program called I Can Connect, which provides services and equipment to those with significant hearing and vision losses.

Nationwide the passage of the American Disability Act led to the establishment of relay services so that individuals who are deaf, hard of hearing and speech impaired may have equal access in making telephone calls. Signing Deaf callers now have access to Video Relay Services whereby they can sign to an operator, then that VRS operator will voice what was signed ~~was said~~ and vice versa. VRS users can use a TV with a Web cam, iPads or a smartphone to access this service.

Communication Access Realtime Translation (CART) is the captioning of the spoken language into text and displayed in various formats. English text is produced with less than a two-second delay. For example, a CART writer sits next to a student in a classroom and listens to the professor, captioning all that is heard, and the English text is being displayed on the computer screen so the student can read along. Also a great accommodation in conference settings, where the captions are projected on a screen for the benefit any participant with a hearing loss.

Current Business & Update

Legislation/LSR – Rich

Note: The crossover from House to Senate happens late March so we have time if we want to provide our support or disapproval for any of this year's bills we are looking at.

SB 364 - This bill establishes a committee to study the feasibility of incorporating complete streets (safe walk ways) into the 10-year transportation improvement plan. This has gone through the Senate and the bill should to pass.

SB 395 – This bill is relative to minimum housing standards for tenants with health or respiratory issues. This bill requires landlords to keep units cool for tenants with respiratory
New Hampshire State Committee on Aging (SCOA)

or other health related issues requiring air conditioning. Introduce to the Senate, the hearing was on Jan 28, 2016.

SB 426 - This bill establishes a commission to study end-of-life choices. Hearing is set for Feb 2, 2016.

Action: Based on Committee discussion and vote, **Rich** will communicate with the chair of this committee to request that SCOA be on the list of members on this committee.

SB 432 - This bill clarifies the law requiring itemized statements containing amounts billed for medical services. Hearing is set for Feb 2, 2016.

SB 434 - This bill provides that an approved prior authorization for prescription medicine, excluding opioids and other drugs which have less than a year regimen shall be valid for 12 months. This section will be related to Medicaid Care Management under RSA: 420-J. Hearing was heard in the House on Jan 19, 2016, no report at this time.

SB 471-FN - This bill modifies requirements for walking disability placards and for parking for persons with disabilities. This bill also establishes an additional fine payable to the city or town for violations of parking restrictions. This bill was requested by the committee to study issues concerning parking for those with walking disabilities established in 2015. Hearing was on Jan 26, 2016, no report at this time.

SB 491-FN - This bill requires Medicaid coverage of medically-necessary **home health care** services to be provided to older adults and persons with disabilities in their residences and the community. Hearing was on Jan 26, 2016, no report at this time.

HB 1138 - This bill establishes the Terminal Patient's **Right to Try Act** which allows a patient with a terminal illness access to investigational drugs, biological products, and devices. Hearing was on Jan 26, 2016, no report at this time.

HB 1165 - This bill changes the term "incapacitated" adult to "vulnerable" adult in the laws governing protective services to such adults. A hearing date has not date been scheduled at this time.

HB 1180 - This bill permits municipalities to issue bonds for the purpose of providing or expanding internet service. A hearing date has not date been scheduled at this time.

HB 1257 - This bill requires written documentation from a physician prior to a driver's license suspension or revocation on the basis of physical impairment. A hearing date has not date been scheduled at this time.

HB 1310 - This bill establishing a commission to study health care for all residents of New Hampshire. Hearing was on Jan 26, 2016, no report at this time.

HB 1316 - The bill clarifies the law covering hospital rates for self-pay patients. A hearing has been set for Feb 18, 2016.

HB 1378 - This authorizes a disabled voter who is unable to access a polling place to vote with an absentee ballot. This allows a public facility to be non-compliant with the American Disabilities Act. Granit State Independent Living (GSIL) opposes this bill. Hearings have been done, sub-committee work has been done, no report at this time.

HB 1407 - This bill allows a municipality to adopt a **property tax credit for home health care services of a family member**. No hearing has been set at this time.

HB 1696 - The bill is to modify and extend the NH Health Protection Program (NHHPP). This bill would reauthorize and modify the current program, and create funding mechanisms to cover the required state match. Hearing was on Feb 2, 2016. Sherri spoke about the passionate AARP testimony given.

Medicaid Managed Care – Rich

Everyone that was delayed in Phase 2 Step 1, all the long term care population, people with disabilities now have been move in to the acute care side as of Jan 31, 2016. Phase 2 Step 2 involves moving long term care services into Medicaid Care Management (MCM)

Oral Care

No report.

Commission on the Study of Mental Health

Joan will try to reach out to Sue to get an update on this commission.

Vaughn Awards – Roger Vachon

The Joseph D. Vaughan Award is presented each year to individuals or couples, over the age of 60, who have shown outstanding leadership or demonstrated meritorious achievement as a volunteer, on behalf of older citizens in New Hampshire. One award, for a person or couple, is made for each of New Hampshire's ten counties. This is sponsored by Engaging NH and State Committee on Aging.

A list was sent to all SCOA members of all the organizations that have received an invitation to nominate a volunteer. Invitation to nominate was sent also. Nominations are due by March 11, 2016.

May 2, 2016 is when the ceremony is and that will take place at the state house in the executive council chamber and presented by the Governor. Encourage all SCOA members to attend ceremony. Hope is that the governor will present the awards as well as the commissioner of Department of Health and Human Services.

County Updates:

Hillsborough County – Joan

At the Nashua Senior Center Margo Bell has been name director of the center.

Action: Mark to invite the commissioner of Health and Human Services to our next meeting.

Coos County – Mark

The 2016 Homeless Veteran Guide has been drafted. This has gone out to all police departments, town hall and everyone that they could think of. It is attached to the ServiceLink resource website to the Berlin area and possibly the Littleton area. This guide covers western Maine, eastern Vermont, and all of northern New Hampshire.

The North Country Veterans Council will have a Veterans Conference on Oct 21, 2016. The theme of the conference is “Ear the Hears, Hearts that Care”. The agenda, presenters and services are still in the works.

Strafford County - Candace

Researchers from the Rowan University School of Osteopathic Medicine presented findings at the “2015 Hurricane Sandy Conference: Translating Research into Practice,” showing that strong neighborhood relationships reduced the incidence of symptoms of post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) among older adults exposed to Hurricane Sandy, the superstorm that devastated the Northeast United States. The findings provide new information about how the neighborhoods where older adults live can be bolstered in the face of natural disasters.

Candace would like someone from the emergency services to talk to SCOA if the state has a plan in place in the event of a natural disaster.

Other Cats & Dogs:

Membership – Mark

Mark has received the resignation of Sheila King by email and has forwarded it on the governor's office. There are two open slots still.

Herb, Norma, Russ, Rich, Bob, Sherry, and Mark term expire in June of 2016. Most are in their first term so they can resubmit for a new term. Bob and Rich are completing their second term.

Action: Mark will contact the Governor's office to see if an abbreviated application is possible. Also as Noma has only completed less than a year he will request an exception in line with the precedence set by Rich.

Publicity Update – Mark

The Spring edition of Aging Issues goes to press in mid-March. This is a great opportunity to get some County related stories and information in the publication.

Meeting Schedule – next meeting will be on March 7, at 10 AM

Scheduled Guest Speaker: Medicare provided diabetes education: Rachel S. Eichenbaum, MSN,RN of New England Quality Innovation Network – Quality Improvement Organization (NE QIN-QIO), will present an “Over View” of her “free” **diabetes education** course.

Medicare has a contract through 2019 with them to provide diabetes self-management education throughout New England. It is to improve the health of people living with pre-diabetes or diabetes. The training is **free** of charge. The classes meet once a week for 6 weeks and can be taught on site or anywhere in the community.

Rachel is the New Hampshire instructor who gives the classes. Her hope is that we can spread the word about these classes. <http://www.healthcarefornewengland.org/>

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